

Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee

ABERDEEN, 21 November 2024. Minute of Meeting of the COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Radley, Convener; Councillor Henrickson, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Cross, Davidson, Delaney (as substitute for Councillor Bouse for items 1 to 9) , Graham, Greig (as substitute for Councillor Bouse for items 10 to 15), McLellan and Tissera.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 5 SEPTEMBER 2024

1. The Committee had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 5 September 2024, for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

2. The Committee had before it the committee business planner, as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the reasons for delay for items 14 (Housing (Cladding Remediation) (Scotland) Bill and 17 (Notice of Motion from Councillor Boulton); and
- (ii) to otherwise note the committee business planner.

NOTICE OF MOTION BY COUNCILLOR WATSON - REFERRED FROM COUNCIL ON 11 OCTOBER 2024

3. It was noted that Councillor Watson would not be in attendance at the meeting to move his Notice of Motion.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that the Notice of Motion would be considered at the next meeting on 14 January 2025, in accordance with Standing Order 12.12.

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ADULT PROTECTION COMMITTEE BIENNIAL REPORT - ACHSCP/24/336

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Adult Social Work, which presented the Adult Protection Committee (APC) Independent Convener’s Biennial Report for 2022-24 for assurance purposes, in terms of the delivery and impact of ‘adult support and protection’ in the City.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the Aberdeen Adult Protection Committee’s Biennial report for 2022-24 which had been prepared as required by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, and which provided assurance about progress made over the period.

The Committee heard from Campbell Thomson, Independent Chair for Adult Protection Committee, who spoke in furtherance of the report and answered questions from Members.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE PERFORMANCE REPORT - SFR/24/343

5. The Committee had before it a report by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, which presented the six monthly performance from April to September 2024, of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), against the objectives contained within the Aberdeen City Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee consider and note the performance data provided within the Aberdeen City six monthly performance report April – September 2024 contained in Appendix A.

The Committee heard from Andrew Wright, Local Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, who spoke in furtherance of the report and answered various questions from Members.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the performance report.

POLICE SCOTLAND THEMATIC REPORT - HATE CRIME - POL/24/351

6. The Committee had before it a report by Police Scotland, which provided Members with an overview of the Police Scotland response to the implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021.

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The report noted that Hate Crime was a term used to describe behaviour which was both criminal and rooted in prejudice, and this meant that the law had been broken, and the offender's actions had been driven by hatred towards a particular group.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee discuss, comment on, and endorse the report.

The Committee heard from Superintendent Jason Carrigan and Inspector Kirsten Douglas, Police Scotland, who spoke in furtherance of the report and answered various questions from Members.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that Police Scotland provide further details on the 200 Hate Crimes reported in 2024, to include if any cases had proceeded to Court or if any warnings had been issued and to note that the clerk would circulate this information to Members; and
- (ii) to note the contents of the report.

BUILDING STANDARDS ACTIVITY REPORT - CR&E/24/325

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning, which provided assurance and an overview of the Council's responsibilities in relation to securing dangerous buildings and protecting public safety, as well as activity on unauthorised building work and unauthorised occupation of buildings.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the contents of the report; and
- (b) agree to receive a further Building Standards Activity Report at the meeting of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on 27 May 2025.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

PERFORMANCE REPORT - CORS/24/316

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Data Insights, which presented Committee with the status of appropriate key performance measures relating to services falling within its remit.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comments and observations on the performance information contained in the report Appendix.

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The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the Committee note the contents of the report.

Councillor Graham, seconded by Councillor Tissera, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee:-

1. notes Appendix A forming part of the Performance Report;
2. agrees the Council was failing to meet the national 28 day target for making statutory homeless decisions, as only 55.5% of decisions made locally were within 28 days;
3. requests that the Chief Officer - Housing brings forward to the next meeting of this Committee a comprehensive plan as to how the Council intends to meet its target for making statutory homeless decisions within the stipulated 28-day period;
4. agrees the number of Void properties awaiting/undergoing preparation for re-let had increased between August 2024 and September 2024; and
5. agrees Void Properties have had a huge impact on the rent of Council tenants who were forced to pay higher rents to compensate for the SNP's failure to bring Void properties back into proper use for Council tenants, which had resulted in hundreds unnecessarily being on the Council waiting list rather than in their new home.

On a division, there voted – for the motion (5) – the Convener, the Vice Convener and Councillors Davidson, Delaney and McLellan – for the amendment (3) – Councillors Cross, Graham and Tissera.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to crisis and grant applications processed within two working days at page 109 of the agenda pack, to request that a service update be issued to Members once the data was available from Scottish Government;
- (ii) in regards to people selling tobacco on the street, to request that information be provided to the Vice Convener with contact details of who to contact with any information; and
- (iii) to otherwise adopt the motion.

ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT - CORS/24/300

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance, which presented the annual report of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee to enable Members to provide comment on the data contained within.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) provide comments and observations on the data contained within the annual report; and

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- (b) note the annual report of the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the annual effectiveness report.

UPDATE ON CONSULTATION EXERCISE FOR CITY CENTRE MULTI STOREYS - F&C/24/324

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord, which updated Members on the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken in November 2023.

The report noted that in November 2023, Aberdeen City Council undertook a consultation exercise on the future of the city centre multi storey blocks. The consultation was carried out by streets-uk with the support of The Tenants' Participation and Advisory Services (TPAS) and Shelter Scotland.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the report on the outcomes of the consultation exercise appended to the report which noted that 49% of residents would prefer a do-minimum option for the blocks;
- (b) note that all options highlighted within the original case required significant financial spend on the properties, all of which may not be affordable; and
- (c) instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to revisit the costs, risks and deliverable timescales for all options in an updated Business Case and to report this to this Committee as part of the Asset Management Plan update no later than 11th March 2025.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve recommendations (a) and (b); and
- (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to revisit the costs, risks and deliverable timescales for all options in an updated Business Case and to report this to a future meeting of this committee and to reflect the future risk and financial requirements for these buildings in the Housing Revenue Account budget process for 2025/26.

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ABERDEEN CITY'S STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2025/26 - 2029/30 - F&C/24/320

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Housing, which sought approval of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for the period 2025/26 – 2029/30, prior to submission to the Scottish Government.

The report noted that the core purpose of the SHIP was to set out strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over a 5-year period to achieve the outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The SHIP reinforced the local authority as the strategic housing authority and detailed how investment priorities would be delivered.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan for 2025/26 – 2029/30 as contained in Appendices 1 and 2; and
- (b) instruct the Chief Officer – Housing to report back to Committee with the implications of the resource planning assumptions, when they were made available from Scottish Government as detailed at 3.5.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the recommendations be approved.

Councillor Graham, seconded by Councillor Tissera, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee -

1. Notes the contents of the report; and
2. Notes the SHIP was usually drafted in accordance with the resource planning assumptions as provided by the Scottish Government. Agrees the SNP had once again let down those desperate for social housing by failing on its resource planning which defies the so-called housing emergency called by Aberdeen Labour and supported by this Committee.

On a division, there voted – for the motion (5) – the Convener, the Vice Convener and Councillors Davidson, Greig and McLellan – for the amendment (3) – Councillors Cross, Graham and Tissera.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

EMPTY HOMES UPDATE REPORT - F&C/24/319

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Housing, which updated Members on the progress Council was making in relation to empty homes.

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The report noted that the Empty Homes Officers worked with owners of empty private residential properties to bring them back into use. 780 empty properties had been brought back into use since the service was introduced in 2018, with the target of 90 properties to be brought back into use over 2023/24, exceeded.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) notes the progress Aberdeen City Council was making in relation to empty homes, which included how they were brought back into use; and
- (b) instructs the Chief Officer – Housing to include an update on empty homes as part of the Housing Board bi-annual report, which would replace the update to Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

HOUSING BOARD BI ANNUAL REPORT - F&C/24/335

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families & Communities, which advised that the report sought to satisfy various committee instructions, which were listed below.

At the meeting of this Committee on 30 May 2024, the Executive Director Families and Communities was instructed to present Committee with bi-annual reports to enable Committee oversight of all housing improvement activity being coordinated by the Housing Board.

On 05 September 2024, the Committee declared a housing emergency and committed to the creation and implementation of a rights based Housing Emergency Action Plan to align the work of internal and external partners to address the housing emergency. Committee recommended that Council establish a cross-party working group to monitor progress against the Plan in addition to reporting progress bi-annually to Committee.

On 30 May 2024, this Committee instructed the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to pause new applications under the Council House buy-back scheme (with the exclusion of any properties in Torry with potential to meet the requirements of RAAC affected tenants) and bring a report on the Acquisition and Disposal policy and buy-backs progress to this committee no later than 21 November 2024.

At this Committee on 17 January 2023, the Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord was instructed to consolidate and refresh all asset management strategies for the HRA estate and report back to this Committee by late 2024.

The report recommended:-

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that the Committee –

- (a) note the progress made by the Housing Board from June to November 2024;
- (b) note the Housing Emergency Action Plan in Appendix A and endorse the areas of focus within the Plan;
- (c) note the evaluations contained in Appendices B and C;
- (d) note the revised Minimum Letting Standard;
- (e) approve the Council Housing Stock Acquisition and Disposal Policy as detailed in Appendix D and instruct officers to review the Policy on a bi-annual basis;
- (f) instruct the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to continue with the suspension of the buy-back scheme and to review this again in early 2026, noting that flexibility remained to purchase individual properties to meet specific requirements; and
- (g) note the intention that the Void Member/Officer working group members would form part of the Housing Emergency Cross Party Working Group.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the Committee approve the recommendations.

Councillor Graham, seconded by Councillor Tissera, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee -

1. notes the contents of the report;
2. agrees the Housing Revenue Account 30 year business plan presented by the SNP did not propose building one single new council home, noting the SNP refused to work cross party to deliver a further 1,000 Council homes within the next 4 years, which reflects badly on the SNP whose actions defy the agreed housing emergency;
3. agrees the number of Void properties awaiting/undergoing preparation for re-let is too high and that the Chief Officer - Housing, in collaboration with the Chief Officer - Corporate Landlord, bring forward an improvement plan within 2 committee cycles to deal with getting Voids down to the hundreds rather than the thousands;
4. notes the decisions by the Council on RAAC, approved by only 4 Council members at an Urgent Business Committee Meeting on 29th February 2024;
5. notes the success of the previous Aberdeen Labour-led administration in obtaining monies from the Scottish Government to buy back properties against the dismal monies obtained by the SNP as outlined at 4.3 of the report; and
6. instructs the Chief Officer – Housing and Chief Officer – Corporate Landlord to reconsider the Council’s Housing Emergency Action Plan and develop a plan like that of the City of Edinburgh Council and/or other local authorities who have declared a housing emergency.

On a division, there voted – for the motion (5) – the Convener, the Vice Convener and Councillors Greig, Davidson and McLellan – for the amendment (3) – Councillors Cross, Graham and Tissera.

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The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

FAMILY SUPPORT MODEL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - F&C/24/327

14. With reference to article 14 of the minute of the meeting of 5 September 2024, the Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director – Families & Communities, which presented a detailed phased Implementation Plan reflecting plans for internal zoning of the Central Library and testing of the Library and Information Service as an integral part of the emerging model.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) endorse the Fairer Futures Implementation Plan available in Appendix A;
- (b) note the Job Profile for the Fairer Futures Partnership Lead post in Appendix B;
- (c) endorse the aligned Future Libraries Plan in Appendix C;
- (d) recommend to Council the establishment of an Elected Member Working Group for the target locality(ies); and
- (e) instruct the Executive Director Families and Communities to report back on progress within one calendar year and make any reports presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee available to members of Communities, Housing and Public Protection through a Service Update.

The Convener moved, seconded by the Vice Convener:-

That the recommendations be approved.

Councillor Graham, seconded by Councillor Tissera, moved as an amendment:-

That the Committee –

1. Notes the report;
2. Agrees the SNP had no credibility when it comes to libraries, noting the unnecessary closing of 6 of our beloved libraries across Aberdeen;
3. Agrees the establishment of an Elected Member Working Group for the target locality(ies) was unworkable due to the intrigant position adopted by the SNP when it comes to library provision within Aberdeen.

On a division, there voted – for the motion (5) – the Convener, the Vice Convener and Councillors Davidson, Greig and McLellan – for the amendment (3) – Councillors Cross, Graham and Tissera.

The Committee resolved:-

to adopt the motion.

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RAAC UPDATE - VERBAL UPDATE AT COMMITTEE

15. The Committee heard from the Chief Officer – Housing and the Chief Officer – Capital, who provided a verbal update in relation to Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC).

Mrs McKenzie began the update by advising that in relation to offers accepted as of 19 November 2024, 198 leases had been signed and a further 10 households had sourced alternative accommodation. 96 Council tenants were awaiting rehoming, with 52 of these tenants, signed for their new homes and in the process of moving, which left 44 households to be rehomed, with 37 of these currently under offer.

In terms of the next steps, Mrs McKenzie advised that the dedicated Housing & Support Team would continue to engage with those individuals/families yet to be rehomed, to work towards a positive outcome for them and their families. The Housing & Support Officers aligned to a household's new home would support them in effectively integrating into their new communities.

In terms of private owners, Mrs McKenzie explained that initial engagement between owners and Aberdeen City Council's appointed consultant, Atkins Realis, was ongoing. There was initial engagement with over 65% of owners and following this engagement, the Valuation Office Agency were undertaking valuation inspections of properties, at an owner's request. Officers were continuing to support owners and private tenants who wish to seek housing with the Council. Officers were currently working with Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH) to provide mental health and wellbeing support and there had also been engagement with Torry Community RAAC Campaign Management Committee, which was ongoing.

The Committee then heard from the Chief Officer – Capital, who provided an update on the masterplanning and demolition of the site. Mr Wilson advised that officers were considering phasing and a preparation programme of demolition, which was interdependent with vacant properties. In regards to masterplanning, a feasibility study was underway and onsite survey works, desk based analysis and statutory notifications were expected to commence in the coming weeks.

Mr Wilson indicated that meetings with key stakeholders and individuals were also taking place, and in relation to funding, approaches had been made to both the UK and Scottish Governments .

Members then asked a number of questions in regards to the update.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the verbal update provided.

- **Councillor Miranda Radley, Convener**